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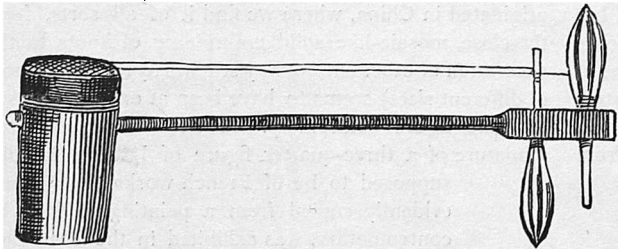
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# BRIC A BRAC

## ORIENTAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.



JAPANESE GUITAR.

OWNED BY MR. JOSEPH W. DREXEL, NEW YORK.

as marked as one might suppose to be the case between the semi-barbarism of the one race and the high cultivation of the other. One cannot imagine anything more primitive than the Malay instrument of hollow wood, with its wooden sticks in place of strings, or the arrangement of reeds with fibres for strings, as shown in our illustrations. But when we come to the instruments of Japan we often find all the finish of a fine old Stradivarius violin, and indeed, generally, such an expenditure of artistic skill in inlaying and fine lacquer finishing as may be looked for in vain in any other country. Our complicated instruments, such as those with valves, keyboards and

hammers, are unknown in Japan. There stringed instruments are used, which are played upon either with a bow or with various kinds of sharpened appliances; wind instruments of wood or shell, with metal tongues, and instruments of percussion, made of wood or metal, in which stretched skins are used. The samisen, illustrated herewith, is a sort of three-stringed banjo, the strings being struck with a piece of ivory. The koto has several varieties, one of which has been known for fifteen hundred years. One which Isabella L. Bird describes in "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan" had thirteen strings of waxed silk stretched from two immovable bridges, placed on a sounding-board of very hard wood, six feet long, standing on four very low feet, with two openings on the under side. It was played with ivory finger-caps, and always before beginning the performers rubbed their hands vigorously together. The Kangura fuyé, or Japanese lute, is said to date from the second to the third century of our era, and the Komé fuyé, or Korean flute, is also very old. The shô is a beautifully decorated and highly finished instrument, having seventeen pipes of varying length let into a wind chest, each pipe being provided with a metal tongue. Its sounds, taken singly, are powerful and melodious. As in all Japanese wind instruments, the measure of the skill of the player on it is the length of time for which he can hold a note. The power and penetrating qualities of the shô and flutes are tremendous, making fearful havoc with the nerves, and few Occidentals would be able to sit out a Japanese concert.

The objects illustrating these remarks all belong to the fine collection of Joseph W. Drexel, and were shown at the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund Loan Exhibition.

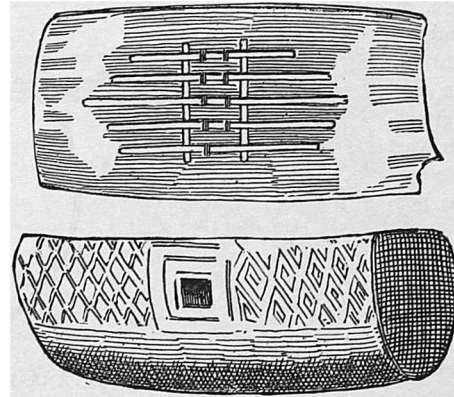
JAPANESE GUITAR, COVERED WITH SNAKE'S SKIN, WITH BRIDGE AND STRING-HOLDER OF IVORY.

OWNED BY MR. JOSEPH W. DREXEL, NEW YORK.

## THE HÔTEL DROUOT.

THE Hôtel Drouot, the world's exchange of art and of bric-à-brac, is perhaps the spot where the pulse of modern Parisian life beats quickest. This great building without angles, with its legend in gilt letters, "Hôtel des Ventes

Mobiliers," beneath which hangs, in funereal fashion, the auctioneer's flag, once tri-colored, now black, resembles a great mausoleum in which all the detritus of Paris, of both high and low life, is piled pell-mell like the bones in an ossuary. The frieze of the façade indicates something of the chaos within. Sculptures without distinguishable outline represent, in a style which is a frightful caricature of the antique, arms and books, jewel-caskets and helmets, brushes and amphoræ—all the insignia and utensils of every art and trade. This frieze, with the posters, yellow, green, blue and red, on the walls, where names of persons and of things the most incongruous encounter one another, is, more than the gilt inscription, the true sign of the house and of the business carried on there. For everything is sold within: pictures of Corô and autographs of Fouquier Tinville; a bundle of official papers on the canonization of Saint Vincent de Paul, and a cafetière of la du Barry; the jewels of Mme. Blanc and those of Sarah Bernhardt.

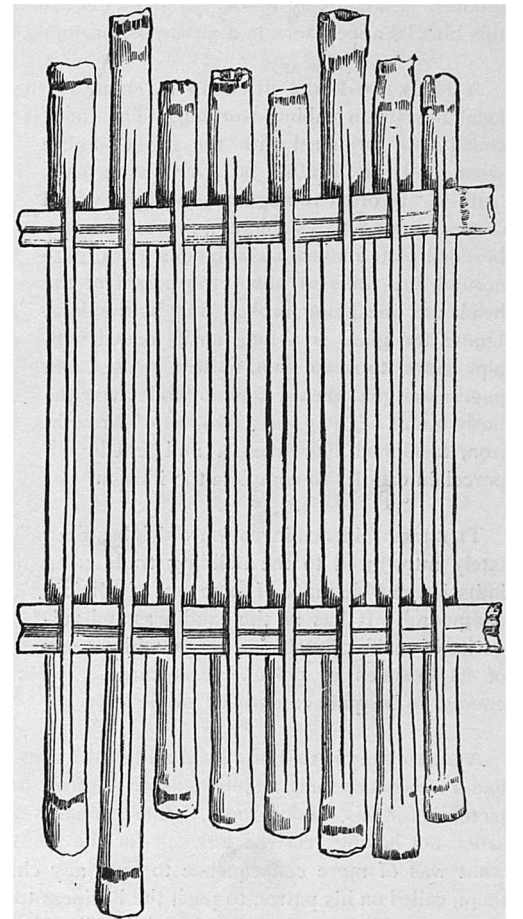


MALAY HOLLOW WOOD MUSICAL INSTRUMENT, WITH STICKS INSTEAD OF STRINGS.

OWNED BY MR. JOSEPH W. DREXEL, NEW YORK.

floats about the passages, fills the salons of the ground-floor, where the close air is enough to give one a headache, and the lower hall, nicknamed after the famous old prison of Mazas, and wanders into the upper salons—into No. 1, where Mme. Blanc's diamonds were exposed, and the little picture-galleries at the rear—or looks in at No. 18, where, crowded into a space that might suffice for a dog-hutch, the knowing ones congregate now and then, at some obscure sale where they have discovered that a picture or a bibelot worth having is to be disposed of. "One should see these rooms and passage-ways on the day of a great sale," says Jules Claretie in his preface to Eudel's book on the great mart. "What a crush! And in the great hall when a sort of volcanic explosion takes place among the bidders, and everybody is on his feet at once!" The little dramas in which but two or three persons act are also well worth studying. When, for instance, the crier, taxing his lungs to the utmost, tries to put some spirit into a sale which lags like a balloon that will not rise, and when the poor man, or widow or orphans whose hopes depend upon his efforts, look on while their fortunes evaporate—disappear into nothingness!

An incident of a different sort is related by M. Ch. Monselet. It was at a sale of pictures of no great value. "Messieurs," said the expert, "we offer you a picture attributed to Rembrandt—No. 18 of the Catalogue—in a perfect state of preservation—for the time." "Ten thousand francs for the Rembrandt," cried the auctioneer. Five hundred were offered, then six, then seven—no more. "Bring it here," said a merchant. He glanced at it a moment and put it away with contempt. Nevertheless, it went up a hundred francs more. Then somebody in the rear of the hall offered a thousand. The dealers looked at one another. None of them recognized the voice, and they did



MALAY REED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT, WITH FIBRES FOR STRINGS.

OWNED BY MR. JOSEPH W. DREXEL, NEW YORK.

not relish the idea of an outsider coming in to trouble them. Then there was a chance that it might be a genuine Rembrandt. "Twelve hundred," cried one. "Fifteen hundred," said the man in the background. No one could see who it was; still the auctioneer accepted the bid. The expert himself gained courage and showed up the Rembrandt again triumphantly. "A veritable Rembrandt, in the painter's best manner," he proclaimed; "the portrait of a notable of Antwerp."

"Sixteen hundred francs." "Seventeen hundred." "Three thousand," exclaimed the man at the rear. Perhaps it was an agent of some Russian prince—of a Viennese banker—of the British Museum. Sometimes these people hide themselves for fear that their mission might be divined and the picture that they wished might become the object of everybody's desire. The auctioneer now woke up. He examined the picture himself; went into ecstasies over it; pronounced it of a marvellous pâte, and a sure-enough Rembrandt, and no mistake. The expert took it on himself to add that it had been engraved. "And the engraving makes part of a celebrated iconography," said the auctioneer. The bids quickly went up to six thousand one hundred francs, and then the unknown struck in again—

"Ten thousand!"

The auctioneer fell back in his chair, laid his hammer aside, and, looking scared, expressed himself to the effect that, in his humble opinion, what had just taken place was something supernatural. "I beg the last bidder to make himself known to me," he cried. "Otherwise I cannot continue the sale."

These words occasioned the liveliest kind of a tumult. Everybody asked everybody else if it were he who had bid ten thousand francs for the picture. Everybody answered in the negative, and no one believed any other person's denial. Finally, the hall had to be cleared. The police took the matter in hand, and succeeded so far as to establish the fact that a ventriloquist had been amusing himself at the expense of the buyers; but they never discovered who it was that had invented this new variety of mystification.

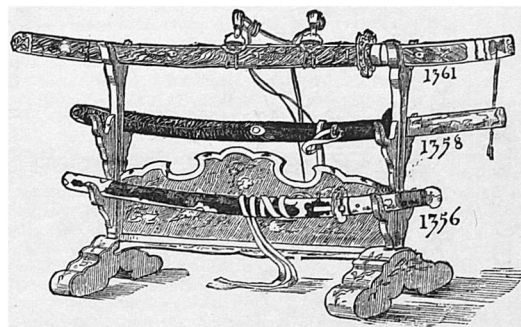
The Hôtel has its seasons. Though open at all times, it is only from October to July that the proceedings offer anything of interest to amateurs. In October or November the market begins to show some signs of recovering from the inaction of

as quickly as possible before the really important sales of collections got together with taste and knowledge come on to complete the season.

### JAPANESE SWORDS.

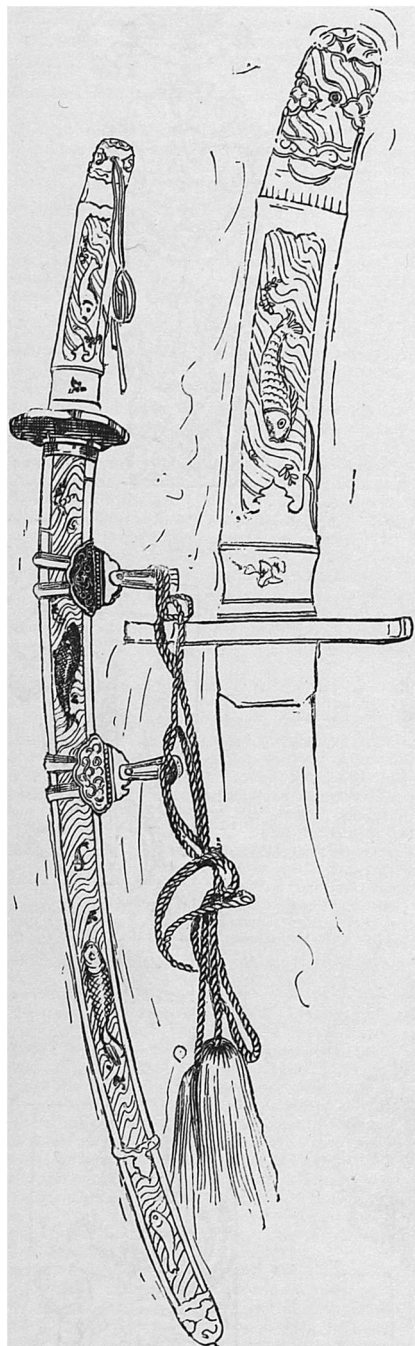
THERE is no object upon which the Japanese have expended more skill in its decoration than the Katana, or sword; and not without reason, for that weapon has been held by them from time immemorial in the greatest honor as a symbol of divinity, of knightly valor and of noble birth. The minute etiquette concerning its use would fill a volume. The rule best known to foreigners regards the use of the sword for suicide by those who considered their honor stained. The short sword is employed for this purpose—the long sword never, because polluted by use against the enemy.

Our illustrations are of choice examples from the noted collection of Mr. Brayton Ives, of New York, and a fine Daimio two-handed sword, owned by the American Art Association, all contributed to the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund Loan Exhibition at the Academy of Design in December, 1883. The last-named example is remarkable for the temper of the blade and the decorative treatment of the hilt, mountings and ornament. Among the Japanese the sword guard (tsubu) is especially a favorite object for artistic design and workmanship, and fine specimens are justly



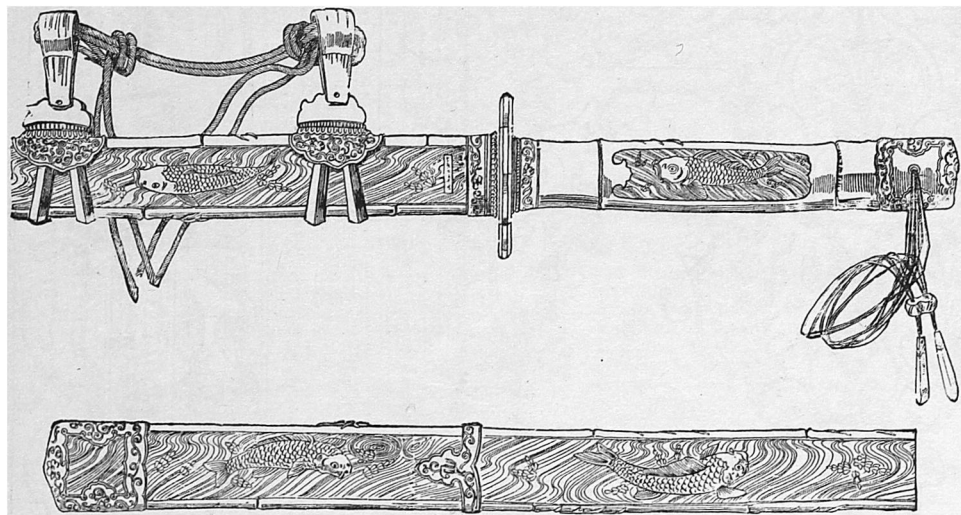
JAPANESE SWORD-RACK, IN LACQUERED WOOD.

OWNED BY MR. BRAYTON IVES, NEW YORK.



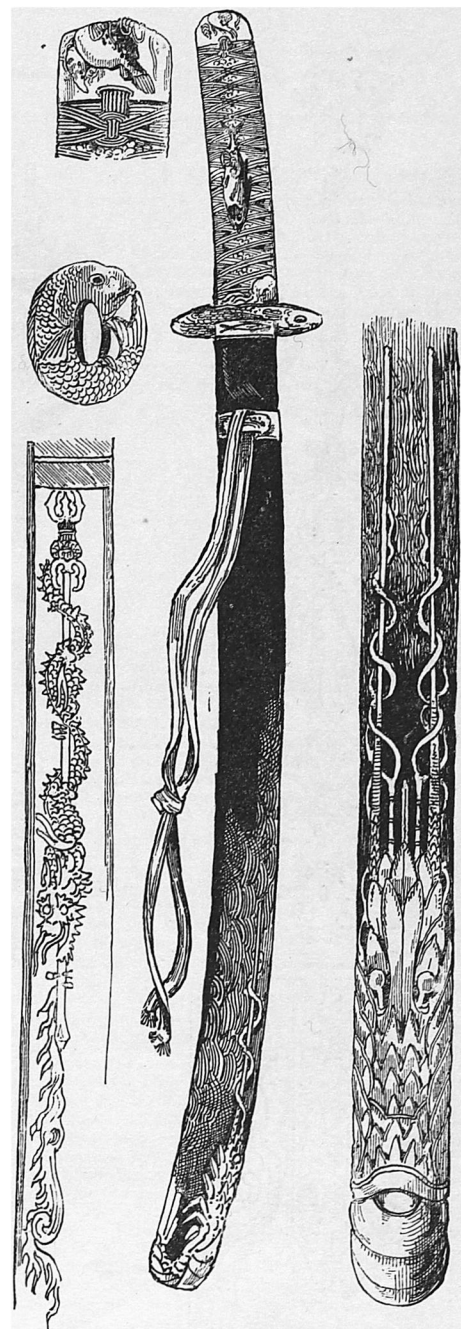
TYCOON DRESS-SWORD.

OWNED BY MR. BRAYTON IVES, NEW YORK.



JAPANESE SWORD AND SCABBARD, SILVER AND GOLD, CHISELLED.

OWNED BY MR. BRAYTON IVES, NEW YORK.



TWO-HANDED DAIMIO SWORD.

OWNED BY THE AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION.

the summer months. At this time every year, the Dutch merchants of bric-à-brac come to Paris with the objects of all sorts which they have collected in their summer peregrinations into every untravelled corner of Europe, and which they get rid of

than three feet, and that of the Wakizashi, or small sword, a little less than two. The Chisa-Katana, or two-handed Daimio sword, such as is illustrated herewith, occupies an intermediate place, being about two feet to two feet and a half long.